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FM AMEMBASSY TBILISI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6396
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

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DEPT FOR EUR DAS BRYZA AND EUR/CARC

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [OSCE](#) [GG](#)
SUBJECT: SOUTH OSSETIA SHOOTOUT MAY 19

REF: TBILISI 1168 AND PREVIOUS

(SBU) OSCE Deputy Head of Mission Veselin Nikolaev confirmed to us May 20 that a three-hour exchange of fire had occurred in the South Ossetian conflict zone May 19, lasting from 2000 to 2300 local time. Nikolaev said the incident was in a usual place: between the South Ossetian asphalt factory south of Tskhinvali and the Georgian positions in Ergneti. He said the South Ossetians had provoked the incident, and the Georgians then returned fire, including with RPGs. Two South Ossetians were injured, including a woman who was briefly hospitalized when she was hit in the foot by a ricochet. Neither injury was serious. Comment: This incident appears to both OSCE and us to be similar to others in a long series of shootouts on the southern outskirts of Tskhinvali. At present it does not seem to be a renewal of the more serious violence precipitated by the South Ossetians a week earlier, on the weekend of May 12-13. End Comment.

TEFFT